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SERVICE DATE - SEPTEMBER 16, 2003

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

AB-602X

**TECUMSEH BRANCH CONNECTING RAILROAD COMPANY-ABANDONMENT
EXEMPTION-IN LENAWEЕ COUNTY, MI**

BACKGROUND

Tecumseh Branch Connecting Railroad company (TBCR) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 to abandon approximately 0.8 miles of railroad of the Tecumseh Branch of the former Detroit, Toledo & Ironton Railroad (DTIR) extending from TBCR's point of interchange with Adrian & Blissfield Rail Road Company's mainline at milepost 45.5 to the end of track at milepost 46.3 in Adrian, Lenawee County, MI. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip code 49221. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the exemption becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track,¹ ties and other railroad appurtenances, and to dispose of the right-of-way.

CONTACTS AND PROCEDURES

The railroad has submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post-abandonment activities, including salvage and disposition of the right-of-way. The railroad has served the environmental report on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Board's environmental rules at 49 CFR 1105.7(b). We have investigated the record in this proceeding. Also, we have consulted with appropriate agencies and individuals to verify the railroad's report and to obtain additional information and comments regarding the potential environmental effects of the proposed abandonment. Contacts have included Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Historic Preservation Officer, National Park Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Public Service Commission, and National Geodetic Survey.

¹Defined as removal of track and ties

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The TBRC proposes to abandon approximately 0.8 miles of the out-of-service rail line known as the “Tecumseh Branch” of the former DTIR. For over two years, this line did not have any local or distant traffic and none is expected in the future. The rail line’s shipments consisted primarily of agricultural and some industrial materials and products.

All operations and maintenance of this line have ceased. Abandonment will result in removal of the rail and crossties. Agricultural land does not adjoin this line and, accordingly, there should be no affect on agricultural land. The City of Adrian (City) has identified the land adjacent to the TBCR as “Parks-Recreation-Open Space”. The City’s planned use for the corridor is a bike path. Therefore, the City states in its letter of May 20, 2003, that the abandonment of this rail line is consistent with the City’s long-range Land Use Plan.

No diversion of traffic from rail to truck transportation will occur as a result of the proposed abandonment, and, therefore, no significant impact on air quality would occur. There would not be any diversion of rail traffic to trucks, and, therefore, no significant increase in noise would result. However, temporary increases in noise levels during salvage may occur, but should not have a significant impact on the area surrounding the proposed abandonment. The proposed abandonment is not anticipated to have any effect upon Federal, state or local water quality standards. The proposed abandonment is not anticipated to adversely affect endangered or threatened species or areas designated as critical habitat.

Cultural and Historic Resources

The railroad submitted an historic report as required by the Surface Transportation Board’s environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.8(a)]. The railroad served the report on the Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) pursuant to 49 CFR 1105.8(c). The SHPO has submitted comments stating that no historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) would be affected by the proposed abandonment. We have reviewed the report and the information provided by the SHPO and concur with the SHPO’s comments.

Pursuant to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation’s regulations for implementing the section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act at 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1) and 36 CFR 800.8, we have determined that the proposed abandonment will not affect historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The documentation for this finding, as specified at 36 CFR 800.11(d), consists of the railroad’s historic report, all relevant correspondence, and this EA, which have been provided to the SHPO and made available to the public.

CONDITIONS

No conditions are recommended.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, abandonment of the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed abandonment would include denial (and therefore no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment, and continued operation by another operator. In any of these cases, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

PUBLIC USE

Following abandonment and any salvage of the rail line, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Federal Register notice.

TRAILS USE

A request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of the petition for exemption in the Federal Register. Nevertheless, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so in a particular case. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 CFR 1152.29).

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The Board's Office of Public Services (OPS) responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact OPS directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Room 848, Washington, DC 20423.

COMMENTS

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, you should send an **original and two copies** to Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Phillis Johnson-Ball, who prepared this environmental assessment.

Please refer to Docket No. AB-602X in all correspondence addressed to the Board. If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Phillis Johnson-Ball at (202) 565-1530.

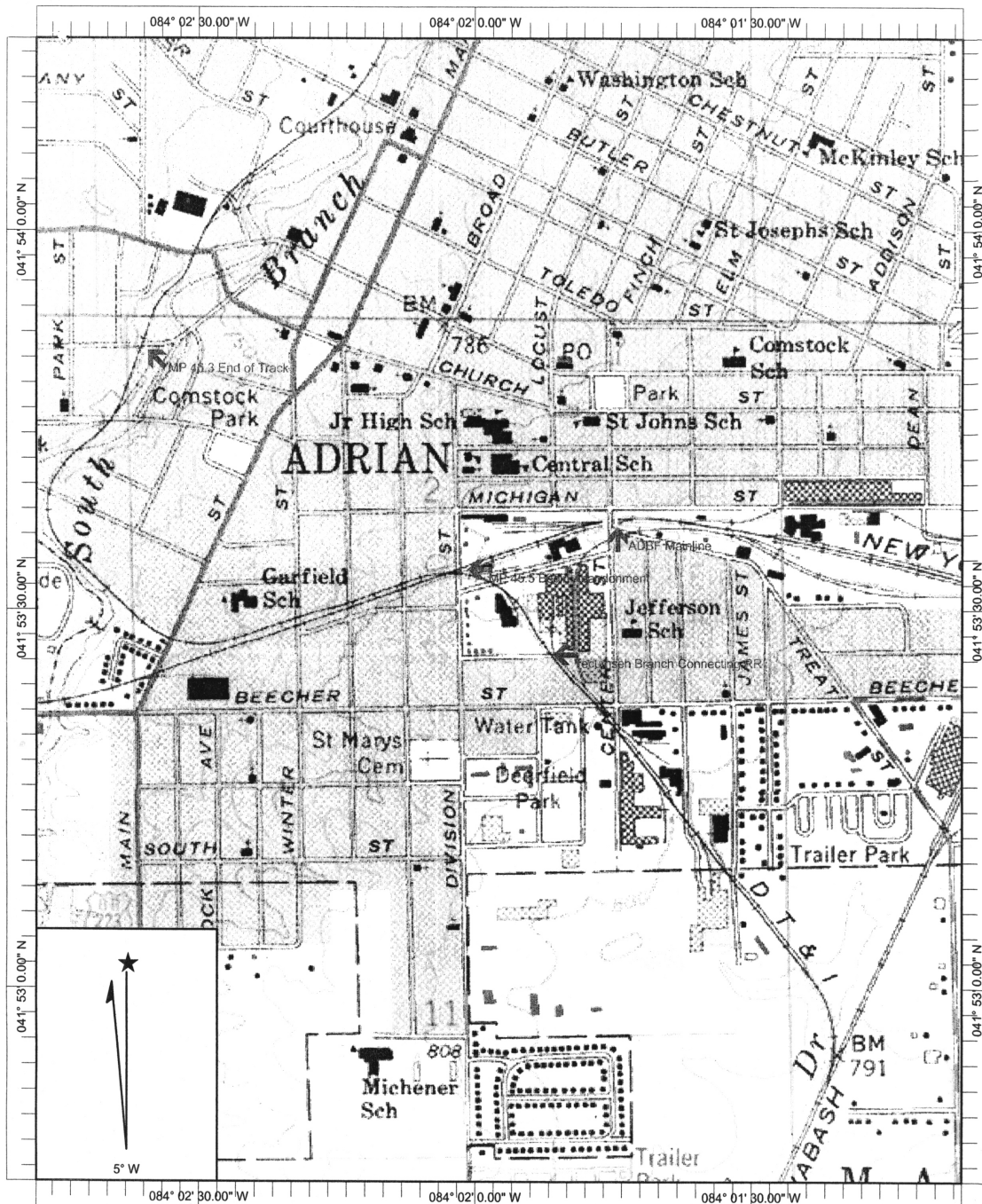
Date made available to the public: 9/16/03.

Comment due date: 10/1/03

By the Board, Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment



Name: ADRIAN
 Date: 6/2/102
 Scale: 1 inch equals 1000 feet

AB-602X

Location: 041° 53' 29.9" N 084° 01' 57.4" W
 Caption: EXHIBIT A

Abandonment Docket No. AB602X
 Tecumseh Branch Connec. RR

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